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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

fastNOTES

Ride Smarter

Fall 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

F is for Flextime

The Confident Commuter focuses on alternative commute options

Flex work weeks (or Compressed workweeks) are growing in popularity amongst employers who are facing increasing turnover costs and a demand for a commute friendly corporate solution and even more so with employees who desire autonomy and freedom in the workplace.

Flextime is an Agreement

The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines a flexible work schedule as an alternative to the traditional 9 to 5, 40-hour work week. It allows employees to vary their arrival and/or departure times. Under some policies, employees must work a prescribed number of hours a pay period and be present during a daily "core time." The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) does not address flexible work schedules. Alternative work arrangements such as flexible work schedules are a matter of agreement between the employer and the employee (or the employee's representative). The Department of Labor has conducted numerous surveys and published articles and reports on the subject.

Turnover Costs on the Rise

The Society of Human Resource Management reports that turnover costs are estimated to be 100-300% of the replaced employee's cost. Offering flextime to employees reduces turnover and serves as a

benefit both to employers and employees. Reduce absenteeism, boost morale, cut commute costs and make your workplace more effective by implementing flextime into your corporate culture. More flextime benefits provided by Washington State University Cooperative Extension Energy Program in collaboration with Commuter Challenge and with additional support provided by Washington State Department of Transportation:

Flextime Benefits

- Enhance Retention and Recruitment
- Extend Hours of Service
- Expand Use of Equipment
- Improve Scheduling for Peak Workloads
- Increase Employees' Job Knowledge
- Reduce Tardiness and Absenteeism
- Boost Employee Morale
- Improve Employee Performance
- Develop a More Effective Workforce
- Comply with Federal Regulations
- Respond to Natural Disasters
- Become a Green Business

Join the employers that offer flextime. Learn more about this and other commuting options at frederickcountymd.gov/transit.

To read more about the ABCs of Transit, follow the Confident Commuter blog at blog.fredericknewspost.com



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Using public transit increases daily exercise, reduces stress and helps lower rates of heart disease.

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DC Transit Benefits Ordinance

A new ordinance requiring area employers to offer transit benefits to employees if the company is larger than 20 people.

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Public Transit Supports a Healthy Lifestyle

Using public transit increases daily exercise, reduces stress and helps lower rates of heart disease.

Amongst numerous air quality benefits that lead to cleaner air with less pollution, public transportation also contributes to many health benefits for individuals. Studies from the American Public Transportation Association and the Victoria Transport Policy Institute support this concept:

Health Benefits:

- Individuals who use public transportation get three times the amount of physical activity per day of those who don't (approximately 19 minutes instead of 6 minutes) by walking to stops and destinations. Inadequate physical activity contributes to numerous health problems, causing an estimated 200,000 annual deaths in the U.S., and significantly increasing medical costs. Among physically able adults, average annual medical expenditures are 32% lower for those who achieve physical activity targets (\$1,019 per year) than for those who are sedentary (\$1,349 per year).
- Riding the bus also reduces stress. Public transportation improves

access to education and employment, which in turn leads to better long-term economic opportunities. In fact, 12 percent of transit riders are traveling to schools and almost 60 percent are going to work. It also provides access to social and recreational activities, allowing individuals to participate in events they otherwise couldn't. Furthermore, public transit benefits community cohesion by promoting positive interactions between neighbors.

- Transit contributes to lower rates of respiratory and heart disease. The health effects of mobile source pollution can be severe and even life-threatening, particularly to children, older adults and adults with respiratory illnesses. Many groups are at greater risk because of chronic lung or cardiovascular disease, including people with diabetes, whose cardiovascular systems are threatened by particle pollution.
- Traffic casualty rates tend to decline as public transit travel increases in an area. Residents of transit-oriented communities have only about a quarter

the per capita traffic fatality rate as residents of sprawled, automobile-dependent communities. According to a 2006 report, public transit has 0.03 fatal accidents per 100 million miles—about 1/25th the rate for automobiles; injuries as well as fatalities are reduced.

In addition, many public transportation agencies offer mobility services for elderly adults and persons with disabilities. These services provide access to medical appointments and social trips that would often go missed. TransIT Services of Frederick County provided 36,731 paratransit trips in Fiscal Year 2014.

Although the health benefits of public transit may seem obvious, you can never understand the true benefit of riding the bus, biking to work, carpooling, or using the train until you have tried it. Visit frederickcountymd.gov/transit for tips, tricks and tools to help your commute.



TransIT ezFARE Promotes Frederick Tourism

The mobile ticketing app and new one-day pass will allow passenger to purchase tickets with a smart phone.



TransIT's mobile ticketing app, TransIT ezFARE, will be available for public download on November 17th, encouraging passengers to purchase tickets with their smart phone. The mobile fare payment app is a transit industry newcomer with only a select amount of agencies equipped with the technology. The app requires no infrastructure, saving the County thousands of dollars as opposed to installing smart card readers on all 26 Connector buses and 19 Shuttles.

ezFARE will introduce a new fare option, a one-day pass, which will appeal to tourists and shoppers looking for a convenient bus option that allows them

to ride unlimited routes for 24 hours for a set price of \$4.00.

TransIT has created a Points of Interest Map for visitors looking to explore historical sites, museums, shops, restaurants, hotels and other destinations while in Frederick County. The map indicates corresponding bus routes and can be found on the TransIT website.

Visitors can also take advantage of event ride matching through the Commuter Connections website when visiting the area.

Call 301-600-2065 with questions about the app.

BECHTEL RELOCATION AND THE EFFECTS
ON FREDERICK COUNTY, MD EMPLOYEES

Vanpool Options in Frederick Co.

Bechtel's relocation to Reston, VA beginning this December may seem discouraging to current employees of the Frederick County, MD location, but commuting by vanpool or utilizing commute alternatives will be viable options for those who do not want to permanently move out of the county. TransIT will work with Bechtel HR staff to ensure all employees have up to date and accurate information about their commute options.

FAST FACTS

32%

Of Frederick Co. residents work outside of the County

12%

Of Frederick Co. residents vanpool to work.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on vanpool subsidies, commute alternatives and more information contact:

301-600-RIDE
TRANSITRIDESHARE@FREDERICKCOUNTYMD.GOV



Wells Fargo, a Frederick County employer, is a Platinum Employer, offering Transportation Demand Management programs to employees

DC Employer
Transit Benefits
Ordinance

A new ordinance requiring area employers to offer transit benefits to employees if the company is larger than 20 people

Beginning January 1, 2016, DC employers will be required to offer transit benefits to their employees if the company is over 20 people in size. The Sustainable DC Omnibus Act, a new sustainability ordinance that includes topics like banning styrofoam containers and protecting honey bees, requires all employers to comply.

From the ordinance: A covered employer shall provide at least one of the following benefit programs:

- A **pre-tax** election transportation fringe benefit program that provides commuter highway vehicles (vanpools), transit or bicycling benefit levels at least equal to the maximum amount pursuant to section 132(f) from the Internal Revenue Code (\$130/mo).
- An **employer-paid benefit** program whereby the employer supplies a transit pass or reimbursement of vanpool or bicycling costs.
- **Employer-provided transportation** at no cost to the covered employee in a vanpool or bus operated by or for the employer (shuttles and vanpools).

What does this mean for you? Many employers already offer these benefits throughout the region, including Frederick County, and some are required to do so per their County Regulation (Montgomery County as an example). Check with your HR department to see if your employer offers transit benefits and, if not, contact TransIT to set up a consultation.

Transit benefits decrease cost, save taxes, increase job satisfaction, reduce stress. Learn more about the ordinance at godcgo.com.

A Commuter
Safety Net

Don't commute without a safety net. GRH provides a free solution for commuters who get unscheduled overtime or have an emergency.

Frederick County is a member of Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments Commuter Connections program, a computerized car and vanpool ride matching service which is free to Frederick area commuters.

Commuters that take advantage of this service are eligible to participate in a program that is also known as free commuter insurance. Guaranteed Ride Home provides a free ride home for registered users in the greater Washington/Baltimore metropolitan region who commute at least two times a week. In the event of an unexpected emergency or unscheduled overtime, Commuter Connections will arrange for a free taxi or even a rental car up to four times a year.

The program is easy to sign up. You can visit frederickcountymd.gov/transit or call 301-600-RIDE. Commute and work information is recorded into a database of over 30,000 other commuters; the database then recognizes your start and ending addresses and provides a cumulative list and interactive map of the potential commuters. The Guaranteed Ride Home program is included in this database.

Using Guaranteed Ride Home is also easy. Commuter Connections has partnered with several taxi companies to provide the most convenient service for your ride home. Simply call 1-800-745-RIDE to schedule a pickup. This service is free and no commitment is required, you simply have to be an active commuter registered on the Commuter Connections database.

Get started at commuterconnections.org or by calling 301-600-RIDE.

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Transit Services of Frederick County
1040 Rocky Springs Rd.
Frederick, MD 21702

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SIT BACK
RELAX &

enjoy the view

VANPOOLERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ, RELAX & WORK WHILE COMMUTING.
SAVE MONEY, TIME & STRESS. LEARN MORE AT: FREDERICKCOUNTYMD.GOV/TRANSIT